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**Advance notice to parents about sending a sick child to school**

Dear Parent:

Reported cases of pertussis (or whooping cough) have increased in Wisconsin among children of all ages this summer. It is important that you not send your child to school if he or she has any of the signs or symptoms of pertussis listed below. Sick children with pertussis will be isolated at the school and parents will be asked to take them home. Children with suspected pertussis should be tested, treated with appropriate antibiotics and isolated until at least 5 days of antibiotic treatment have been completed. All suspect and confirmed cases of pertussis need to be immediately reported to your local health department

Pertussis is a bacterial disease that is spread through the air by direct face to face contact with a case of pertussis. Pertussis begins with cold like symptoms and a cough that becomes much worse over a period of 1-2 weeks. Symptoms usually include a long series of coughs ("coughing fits") followed by a whooping noise. However, older children, adults and very young infants may not develop the whoop. There is generally no fever. People with pertussis may have a series of coughs followed by vomiting, turning blue, or difficulty catching breath. The cough is often worse at night and cough medicines usually do not help alleviate the cough. Pertussis is most serious in infants and preschoolers who have not received DTaP vaccine. DTaP vaccine is only licensed for children ages of 2 months through 6 years of age. If you have preschool children at home make sure they are up to date with their DTaP immunizations. If your children are of babysitting age and you suspect that they may have pertussis, they should avoid close contact with infants and preschool children until they have received appropriate antibiotic treatment

Please contact the local public health department that serves your area if there are questions.

Thank you for your cooperation